

An interview with Frances E. Hughes (L)

FRANCES E. HUGHES

An Interview Conducted by

Anita Wells

November 1, 1980

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NARRATOR DATA SHEET

DATE _____

Name of narrator: Frances E. Hughes
Address: 400 S. 29th St., Apt. F, Terre Haute Phone: 232-2212
Indiana
Birthdate: May 20, 1907 Birthplace: 521 S. 7th St., Terre Haute
Length of residence in Terre Haute: all my life
Education: Graduate King Classical School (private high school)

Occupational history: Saturday Spectator weekly paper, 1924;
Terre Haute Star, 1925-1972. Free lance writer, 1972 to present

Special interests, activities, etc. needlework, reading

Senior Citizen activities

Major subject(s) of interview: Early transportation, social life
and history of local newspapers.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interviewer</u>
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FRANCES E. HUGHES

Tape 1

November 1, 1980

In Miss Hughes' apartment--400 S. 29th St., Terre Haute, IN

INTERVIEWER: Anita Wells

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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AW: Frances, let's start at the very beginning and tell us when and where you were born.

HUGHES: I was born May 20, 1907, in my family home at 521 South 7th Street. Children were born at home in those days.

AW: Were you an only child?

HUGHES: Yes.

AW: Was that unusual to be an only child?

HUGHES: No, not really. Most of my mother's friends did not have more than two or three children.

AW: Can you describe the house and the grounds for us?

HUGHES: Well, it was a 12-room house that had been moved there . . . a white frame house that had been moved there from the northwest corner of 6th and Cherry Street. It had been the parsonage of the Baptist church there. That old brick church was later used for a while as a bus station. The house was moved down there before 1880 and was later raised and the roof was raised. And then, apparently, my grandfather built (or had built) what they now call a carriage house but which we called "the barn" in the back. It had a space for the carriage and stalls for a horse and my mother's pony that she had when she was a little girl, and then the coal bin and a two-holer toilet. On the second floor was space apparently for feed for the animals.

AW: What kind of conveniences were inside the house?

HUGHES: Well, by the time I came along there was a bathroom with a chain-pull toilet, and we had . . . I can't remember not having a telephone. But I had to stand on a chair and crank the handle to get the operator to give her the number. We had gas lights, and I had to stand on the table as a little girl to pull the chain to pull on the gas lights. Later, all

HUGHES: those fixtures were changed to electricity, and, of course, we got a modern phone.

There were the usual things that were in a house in those days. We did have a player piano. There are a lot of player pianos around now, but I've never seen one in recent years like this one. It was a piano -- regular piano -- with another instrument that pushed up to it that had felt pieces that banged down on the keys of the piano.

AW: Interesting. Was this gas lights in the house . . . was that city gas?

HUGHES: Yes. We also had what was called city heat. I suppose at one time there had been a furnace, since there was a coal bin out there. But this was piped in some way. And since I was a very frail youngster, they felt this heat was good for me. I have a feeling I didn't eat properly, because I grew up on meat and potatoes. And that's one reason why I was sent to King Classical school in the fifth grade. Because I was going to the old Hulman school, and it was drafty and an old building. The Classical school also had city heat, and they felt I would be healthier if I went down there. And apparently it worked, because I was.

AW: Did you have any help in the house, aside from your mother?

HUGHES: We always had a hired girl. Hired girls in those days got \$3 a week and had one afternoon off. When I think back, they must have had Sundays sometimes, too. The hired girl's room was off the kitchen downstairs. Now in many of the houses those days the hired girl's room was upstairs in the back. Now, as I remember, she didn't use the bathroom, except she must have taken a bath there. But she used the outdoor two-holer.

AW: You mentioned the Hulman school. Where was this Hulman school located?

HUGHES: It was on the southeast corner of 7th and Swan Streets -- just a block and a half from where I lived.

We also had a laundress who came in twice a week, and she did the washing and ironing.

AW: How did you get to school when you were in the early grades? Did you walk?

HUGHES: Well, Classical . . . King Classical school was on the southwest corner of 6th and Park Street, which was only five or six blocks from my house. So I walked to school. I walked home for lunch and walked back, and walked home after school unless my father came after me.

AW: Did you go on family trips of any sort?

HUGHES: The only trips we took were to Culver Indiana in the summertime. We had a cottage up there, and we'd go up as soon as school was out. Well, the first time I was taken was when I was three weeks old; but after I was in school, we'd go as soon as school was out and stay until school started in the fall. And we would drive up . . . our first car was a Chalmers, and we would drive up in the Chalmers. And then my dad would take the excursion train on the weekend on Friday night and come back on Sunday afternoon. We would stay there all summer, but that's about the only trips we ever took.

AW: Did this excursion train go from Terre Haute to Culver?

HUGHES: From Terre Haute . . . I believe it went clear on to South Bend. And there were two stations there, and it was a big deal to go down to the station and watch the train come in.

AW: Where were the stations?

HUGHES: One was at . . . where they call Long Point. Most of the Terre Haute people had cottages on the west side of the lake Lake Maxinkuckee and the Indianapolis and Chicago people had them on the east side. I don't know why. The academy -- Culver Military Academy -- was on the north shore. At that time there were about 11 hotels up there, and it was a very social place. My mother was never a very social woman as far as "society" is concerned, but those who did enjoy those things went to a lot of those. As a young girl -- I went up there until I was about 15 -- it was a real thrill to go to dances with the cadets at 15.

AW: Do you have any other early recollections of Terre Haute transportation?

HUGHES: Well, the streetcars passed our house and the interurbans, too, because the interurban to Sullivan went down South 7th Street on the streetcar tracks. And it must have been the interurbans, because they were so heavy that they shook the house so that we could never keep pictures straight in it.

Another thing about the house. They had lace curtains in those days, and with 12 rooms those curtains had to be washed every month (in the wintertime especially), because everybody burned soft coal around here, and it was filthy. When it snowed, by the next morning the snow was all covered with soot. They talk about environment protection now. My mother lived to be 91, and she breathed that smoke for years. So did I, and it didn't kill us.

AW: (chuckle) At least you don't think it did.

HUGHES: Well, it didn't very early on.

AW: Did you ride the streetcars very much in Terre Haute?

HUGHES: Well not really, except the entertainment on Sunday afternoon, frequently, was to get on the streetcar on the corner and ride around north on 7th to Wabash, down Wabash to 3rd, and south on 3rd to Osborne. And then they'd turn the car around, and you'd ride back. And that was Sunday afternoon entertainment, especially in the summertime. In the summer the cars were open cars with a running board along each side and the seats were woven rattan, I guess, and they were cool. Also, another thing we did all year 'round -- we would walk downtown about 9 o'clock (my dad, my mother and I) and get a hot tamale. The hot tamale man was always on the corner. There were other men around in those days. There were . . . once in a while you'd see a German band. And once I remember a hurdy-gurdy man man with accordian and monkey being here. There also was a scissors-sharpener man who had a bicycle with a wheel on the front of it to sharpen scissors. Then there was the rag man who came down the alley yelling, "Old rags, bottles," and so on and there was always

HUGHES: a vegetable cart came down the alley. You could go out and buy your fresh vegetables.

AW: Was this in the 'teens -- /the/ 1910 to 1920 era? When this was all going on? The men on the street corners . . .

HUGHES: Well, it would have been from probably about 1900 to 1920.

AW: But you yourself, living so close to town, didn't ride the streetcars very much.

HUGHES: No, I didn't. Now people who lived out farther and didn't have automobiles rode the streetcars. There was no reason to ride them as near as I was to town. But they rode them all the time. And young people would have dates on them. They'd go downtown to a movie, get a soda, and ride home. By the time the dance halls came in there were more automobiles. Young people had automobiles.

There was a lot of social life in Terre Haute.

AW: During what time?

HUGHES: Well, up until perhaps World War II. When I was young (when I was in my teens), most young people in my crowd had one dance. And during the Christmas holidays there was a dance every night. They'd have them at the Elks ballroom or the Phoenix Hall which is over where the Labor Temple is now. You would get an invitation, and at the bottom of your invitation would be the name of your escort or the name of /the person whom/ you were to escort. And it was usually somebody you didn't want to go with. But you were only obligated really to dance the first and last dance with them, so if you were popular at all you got around that very successfully. Later on, when I went to dances like proms and fraternity dances and all, they had very fancy programs. Your date usually filled in the first and last dance and maybe one in between; and then, when you got there, the boys would come up and ask your escort if he could have a dance, and then /he would/ put his name down on your program. /The/ girls kept scrapbooks or put those up in their mirrors, and they were quite the thing to have. Also, at some of the dances they used to have favors -- oh, bracelets

HUGHES: or decks of cards with the fraternity crest or something like that.

AW: When you say the people in your crowd had dances, does that mean that one of your friends was sponsoring the dance that night and the next night another . . .

HUGHES: No, they just invited about . . . I suppose about 50 young people. Now, I didn't have a dance, but when I was 16 years old, my folks had a picnic for me. They chartered a bus and got a caterer and cateress and took us out to a camp of a friend of my dad's which was up on a hill overlooking the river, across the river. We had a picnic dinner and just visited around, I guess.

AW: When you were in high school, since you went to the private school . . . what was King Classical school? Can you explain that?

HUGHES: In those days there were finishing schools for young ladies, and that was the school like St. Mary's Academy where they taught you to be a lady, I guess (laughs). They put great emphasis on art and needlework besides the three R's /reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic/.

Now, Classical was a grade school -- kindergarten, grade school and high school -- and I went in the fifth grade. When I started there, I studied German, and that was very unusual in those days. But then along came World War I, and you were supposed to burn your German books. Nobody taught German in this country. So, I changed to French. I took French seven years there which was unusual in those days, and I went on through high school. Now, that was considered a preparatory school. You had to take entrance examinations for the, I guess you'd call them, women's Ivy League schools -- Vassar and Wellesley and Smith, such schools as that. This was to prepare you to be able to pass that examination, and they put great emphasis on English. They had chapel once a week, and you had to perform in chapel. You had to recite, or they presented a play or something. And then a couple of times a year they would present plays at the YWCA for the parents or friends or public, anybody who wanted to come.

AW: Were there both boys and girls at this school?

HUGHES: When I went there first, there were boys and girls. Later on, I think it turned into . . . when I was still in school, it was still boys and girls, but later on I think it was just girls. There were only seven in my class which was a great advantage, because you . . . well, it was a disadvantage in some ways. You had to recite every day. You had to be called on.

AW: I know that you had an uncle who used to take you on trips.

HUGHES: Well, when we had . . . our first car, as I said, was a Chalmers. It was what they called a touring car -- an open car that the top would let down. I was a tiny girl then, and they were afraid I'd fall out, because it didn't have any doors. So they had patent leather doors made for it, and they didn't close very well. You had to bang 'em three or four times before they'd close. Well, this car, of course, had to be cranked. You set some things on the dashboard, and then cranked it and cranked it and finally got it started. It had four acetylene brass lamps on it -- huge things. There were two headlights and two on the sides. And my dad came in one morning almost in tears. Somebody had stolen all the lamps off of the car in the night while it was in the garage.

AW: Were those quite expensive?

HUGHES: I suppose they were. I suppose the insurance took care of it. I was so little I don't . . . I just remember him being upset. But you bought gasoline . . . on the way to the lake you bought gasoline in the hardware stores. And if you needed to make a rest stop, you made the rest stop along the road. There wasn't much traffic, and it was usually by a farmer's field; so there was a certain amount of privacy. And if it stormed, you had to . . . the man had to get out and put on the side curtains. And by the time he got the side curtains on, he was drenched and the storm was usually over. I remember once pulling into a farmer's barn. Of course, sometimes you could use a farmer's privy on the way.

My uncle -- my mother's brother, Ed Johnson, -- wrote some of the first routes for the auto club.

HUGHES: If you went on a trip with him, you sat there with a pencil and paper and . . . the roads weren't marked in those days. They were all -- or practically all -- either gravel or mud, just mud roads. So you might get stuck in the mud. If you got stuck in the mud, you had to hunt up a farmer and get his horses to pull you out. And the women all wore dusters and scarves over their hats, and the men wore dusters with matching caps -- billed caps. And I don't know what the children wore. I don't believe they did anything about them (laughs), because it was dirty, and, of course, if the top was down and it was sunny, you'd get sunburned.

AW: When you were with your Uncle Ed, what did you write down on these maps?

HUGHES: Well, you would write: "Go three miles north, turn right at the red barn," and maybe like, "10 miles east and turn left at the oak tree." Well, if the oak tree had blown down and the red barn had burned down, you were in big trouble. You didn't know where you were.

AW: Were there any signs along the roads that said such and such town 10 miles?

HUGHES: No. Nothing like that in the beginning when we first started going to the lake. We'd usually go both cars at the same time, so that if there was a storm, they had to put up side curtains . . . Also, they had to change tires half a dozen times along the way and sometimes patch the innertubes. I think they called it vulcanizing them, I'm not sure. And if there were two men along, it was much better.

AW: So your father would be in one car and your uncle in the other?

HUGHES: Yes. Our family in one, theirs in the other. There was an extra wheel on the running board. On the driver's side there was a tool chest and also chains -- four chains -- so that if you got stuck, you could put those on the tires and help pull it out. Or if it was slick . . . 'course we didn't go when it was slick.

AW: What was it like driving in the winter? Did you drive down . . . from home, say to downtown? Did you drive or did you just walk or . . . ?

HUGHES: Well, we just usually walked; it was so close. But if we went anyplace in the car, you had a heavy wool lap robe that you bundled all around you -- two or three of them in a car. Everybody'd bundle up in a lap robe, because those side curtains . . . there was no glass in the car other than the windshield. In the summer, that windshield would split in the middle and both parts -- or either part could be lowered -- so that the air came in. In the winter, those side curtains only had isinglass, I guess you called it, in them. And certainly there were no heaters. There were, of course, no air-conditioners. So you had to take care of the weather yourself.

A friend and I went to Bloomington once. We thought we were going on a bus. We went down to a dance on Friday night, and we went as far as that road that goes south . . . well it goes south to Bloomington and north to Greencastle . . .

AW: Route 231 now?

HUGHES: Yes. I think it is. And when we got there, we were to change buses. And there was a grocery or restaurant or something there, so we were bundled out of the bus and into the restaurant, and for the rest of the trip we went in an open car with side curtains. It was bitter cold and slick. And every time we got to a hill, we had to get out and walk up the hill, because the driver was afraid that the car wouldn't make it or he'd have an accident or something. So all the way to Bloomington we walked up all the hills. (laughs)

AW: Now, how old were you when this happened?

HUGHES: I guess I was probably 17 or 18.

AW: Let's pinpoint where that was. U.S. 231 and it would now . . . it would be State Road 46. Would that be the other road?

HUGHES: Yes. I think that was the other road.

AW: You told me you had a Chalmers for your first car. Did you have another car after that?

HUGHES: Yes. About 1920 my family bought a Reo. It also was a touring car with side curtains. The brake and clutch pedals were on the floor, and the gear shift also was there. There was a choke on the dash, and you had to keep pulling the choke when you started the car to get it going right. There was a starter on that one, however, in the floor. This car was stolen from the garage -- the same garage -- by bootleggers during Prohibition and was used for a couple of months to run liquor between Detroit and Chicago [according to the police]. We finally got it back, and it wasn't in too good a shape. They'd thrown out the back seat, so they could fill the whole back end of the car with liquor.

Other cars that were popular in that day were Model-T Fords and Packards and Duesenbergs (I think Duesenberg was made in Indianapolis), Essex, Willys, Oldsmobile, Buicks, LaSalles, Marmons, and so on. The popular ones for young men when I was dating and when I was, oh, from 16 to 20--some were Kissel Kars. These were usually convertibles. It was a sports car. And Stutz sports cars. And the expensive LaSalles. Usually they were coupes, as I remember them. And most of the convertibles had rumble seats. To get in a rumble seat you climbed up two steps on the side of the convertible and then stepped over into the rumble seat. You had to be quite agile and usually it was young people who used them for that reason.

AW: Wasn't it scandalous to ride in the rumble seat?

HUGHES: Well, if you wanted to neck, it wasn't very satisfactory because you were out before God and (laughing) everybody, and you were very discreet in those days. Some of the larger cars had two side seats that let down from the back of the front seat or pulled up from the floor. I think there're still some undertakers' cars that have those side seats.

There were no motels until the 1930's. The first ones were small frame cabins, and they were a dollar a night. And as recently as 30 years ago, they were only \$3 a night. My mother and I went to Florida, and we never paid over \$3 for a motel room.

I learned to drive that Reo when I was 15, and I didn't have to have a license. And it was hard to keep brakes on it, because it was a very heavy car.

HUGHES: Once my dad couldn't stop for a streetcar and just went on . . . clear on up over the sidewalk and down along the other side. I can just see that in an old movie almost. (laughs)

AW: He didn't hit the streetcar?

HUGHES: No. He didn't hit anybody getting off either, but he would have -- he'd either have hit the streetcar or somebody getting off. But he went clear up around it on the sidewalk.

AW: Did you ever have an accident in the Reo?

HUGHES: No.

AW: Were you ever in an accident?

HUGHES: The accident I was in was in an electric car. I sometimes had dates in the electric cars, and the boys' mothers would have them, and they would borrow the car. It was like sitting in a little jewel box. It was glass all around and had one seat across the back and then two seats in front which faced three-quarters way back, one on each side. When you think back, it must have obstructed the view of the driver a little bit. And they all had one or two little cut glass vases in them, and the women kept fresh flowers in those.

AW: Why did the women drive those?

HUGHES: Well, they were intended for women. They were intended to . . . just shop around town, because they had to be charged all the time. You couldn't go very far in them. I guess they were just ladylike. And the only car that I was in an accident in in those years was when I was with a friend of mine in her mother's electric, and we got to 6th and Cherry Street by the Deming Hotel. The car only had three speeds forward and one speed back, and when you got to full speed -- which was about 25 miles an hour -- you couldn't get out of anybody's way anyway; that was just it. And I said to her, "That car's gonna hit us." And she said, "Yes, I know." And it did! And we weren't hurt, and the fender was bunged up.

Now these cars . . . everybody who had an electric had a charger in the garage, and it would charge overnight, so that the batteries would be ready to go again. They had two tillers that let

HUGHES: down from the side of the driver -- from the left side. They could be pushed up against the wall there. The lower one was longer, and that's the one you steered by. You turned it away from you to go left and towards you to go right, and it had a pearl button on the end of it that was the electric bell. You didn't have a horn; you had a bell. And the top rod (tiller) was short, and that was the power one. Three speeds forward and one speed back.

AW: Now, were there any taxicabs or . . . ?

HUGHES: Well, before the streetcars stopped, there were jitneys. Most of these were Model-T Fords. And this was one of the causes for the demise of the streetcars. Because the jitneys would take you right to the corner nearest your house where on the streetcar you had to go wherever the tracks were. Of course, they were called jitneys, because they were only a nickel a ride [a jitney is a nickel]. The Fords that were used for them we called "flivvers" or "tin lizzies." They were really the forerunners of the taxis of today. The drivers chose their own routes; and sometimes you could, like a taxi almost (if you knew the driver), make arrangements for him to pick you up. During the rush hours, passengers would sit on each other's laps so they could all get in. Some of 'em had seats -- extra seats -- that were hung on the inside of the doors or on the back of the front seat. These quit running about 1939 because of the start of the city bus service and the severe state regulations.

AW: Let's go back a minute to the streetcars. You mentioned something about a "rush hour" and . . . Was downtown Terre Haute a busy place with a lot of streetcars and cars? Can you describe what downtown Terre Haute was like say in the early 19/20's?

HUGHES: It was a very busy place both in the daytime and at night. People would go downtown to the movies. And when I was in school, my class took a box at the Hippodrome every Saturday to attend the vaudeville shows. They changed every week. And on Sunday afternoon when we were in high school, we usually went to a movie because there were 14 theaters in Terre Haute at that time, and a lot of them were downtown. And then they had vaudeville, and they had stock companies. And then I remember seeing Will Rogers on the stage of the Grand Opera House.

HUGHES: One time they staged "Ben Hur" there and even had horses on the stage and a chariot.

AW: And these shows traveled into town and stayed for a week?

HUGHES: Stayed for a while. Then later on, before the Hippodrome closed as a theater or went to movies -- I think before it closed -- they would bring in road shows. I remember particularly "Tobacco Road" and the Follies.

Then people ate downtown a lot. There were a lot of restaurants. There was King Lem Inn, a wonderful Chinese restaurant; Berry's restaurant for years. There were several . . . Goodie Shop was around then and there was a Thompson's restaurant. McPeak's restaurant was a place where men ate lunch, usually. And my uncle had . . . my grandfather had had a saloon and oyster house, and I think it was either 613 or 615 Wabash Avenue. And then after he died, my uncle kept it going, and it was Johnson's Oyster House and Saloon. Then when Prohibition came along he, too, opened a luncheonette and candy store there. And there was that eating place; there was an Anderson restaurant. There were at least half a dozen other candy stores. A Greek candy kitchen.

AW: What about retail shops? What kind of retail shops were there?

HUGHES: Well, there . . . Herz's and Root's and Kleeman's and Siegel's were department stores. And Levi's was a dry goods store. Levi's had an interesting contraption that took your money and your package up to a balcony. They pushed a lever some way, and it got the basket going on a trolley. And then back would come your change, and your receipt, and your package wrapped. But that was dry goods. That was things for the house and yard goods.

Then Kleeman's was a very fine department store. It was on the southeast corner of 6th and Wabash, which has now been torn down. It was later Montgomery Ward and Metro's. And Siegel's was across the street on the northeast corner of 6th and Wabash and then Herz's was where there's a vacant lot now next to Paige's store at 642 Wabash Avenue. And Root's was the building recently torn down.

HUGHES: And they had fine merchandise. Root's and Herz's both tried luncheon places -- tea rooms. And many women would go down and have lunch there. Shop and have lunch there. And they had . . . dainty china and good food. And many women just went downtown to meet other people and visit.

And then Baur's drug store was a downtown hangout for the kids -- where they went and got cokes. This probably made poor Mr. Arthur Baur lose some money on it. 'Course, it was a drug store, too, but

Now, in Twelve Points the hangout for the kids similar to that was Stewart's drug store, which was at the end of the streetcar line up there -- right across Maple Avenue from Collett Park at 8th Street.

AW: Could you buy anything you wanted to in Terre Haute, or did people hop on the interurban and go to Indianapolis?

HUGHES: People didn't go out of Terre Haute to shop then, because they had beautiful merchandise -- fine merchandise, and the service was good. They had floor walkers in the stores to watch the clerks, watch the merchandise. If the customers looked like they weren't getting good service, the floor walker would come over and say, "Are you being taken care of?" or "Can I help you?" or something. And you really got good service. For a while I was a comparative shopper for Herz's outside of my job, and I was supposed to report on the clerks as well as the merchandise -- compare merchandise and report on the clerks. I only reported on one clerk unfavorably, because she was really impossible.

AW: But there were the interurban lines, and it's been said Terre Haute was the hub of interurbans. Was that . . .

HUGHES: It was. They had interurbans to Clinton and, I believe, Paris and then to Brazil and Greencastle and Crawfordsville and Indianapolis. And you could go to Indianapolis in an hour and a half then on an interurban, 'cause they went 70 miles an hour. They swayed so. I only took a couple of trips on them, and they swayed so they made me a little sick. But they certainly got you there in a hurry, and they carried a lot of freight as well as passengers.

AW: Did the interurbans also go on the streetcar tracks? Did they use the same tracks?

HUGHES: In town, yes. They used the same tracks and that's why they passed our house -- the one to Sullivan. One summer my family rented a little farm house down near Pimento. And rather than the drive back and forth (because the cars only went about 20 miles an hour then), my dad would come in to town on the interurban every day. And he would take the car over to the interurban line which was only a half mile, maybe, and take the interurban in and then come back at night on the interurban.

Many people from Sullivan came to Terre Haute by interurban/. Terre Haute seemed to be closely associated with these towns. 'Course there was coal in all these places. Coal trains went. And we seemed to have a lot of traffic back and forth. I'm sure those people came in here to shop just as they do now, and they probably came on the interurban. 'Cause not all too many people had cars in the beginning.

AW: Now, there's a lot of railroads in Terre Haute, too. Were all the tracks pretty well in place by the time you came along?

HUGHES: I don't remember any tracks being laid -- maybe branches out to businesses or factories or something, but no real lines because those were started very early. Chauncey Rose was one of the ones who developed the railroads in this area. And the Hulmans had vast interest in the railroads later on. When Tony Hulman and Mary Fendrich were married in, I believe, 1926 their private car took the Terre Haute guests down to Evansville for the wedding.

Now, I didn't ride the trains too much, but when you did ride the trains in the summertime, you really got dirty. Because those engines (before diesel engines) belched out all this smoke. You had to put a window down or you'd smother to death, and all this soot came in on you. By the time you arrived where you were going you were filthy. There again, they talk about environment -- nobody paid any attention to it.

AW: Did the trains carry a lot of freight at that time?

HUGHES: Oh, yes, and of course the coal trains. There were lots of coal trains. And they had a lot of excursions. You could go down to the station here about 5 o'clock in the morning and get on the Chicago train out of Evansville (I believe it was the Florida train, but I'm not sure), and for three dollars you could go up to Chicago and spend the day. You got there in three hours. Well, if you went in the diner and had breakfast and visited a while, you were almost there by the time you were through breakfast. So that you could shop all day. And then, I believe, about 5 o'clock the train came back. And you . . . well, it was probably not the same train. And if you had dinner on the train, you were home by the time dinner was over. It was a delightful way to spend a day, and many women did it.

AW: Do you know how much it cost?

HUGHES: Three dollars.

AW: Round trip?

HUGHES: Round trip. It was much more satisfactory than the way you go to Chicago now. 'Cause you either go by bus, which takes five hours, or you go by plane, which means you have to go out to the airport here. Then when you get in Chicago, if you're going downtown, you have to take a cab downtown. And I'm sure it takes almost as long as the three hours it took to go from here to Chicago. And then you got off at Dearborn Street Station which was practically downtown.

AW: Nowadays everyone complains about sitting at the crossings and waiting for the trains to come past and how bad the grade crossings are. Were there similar complaints in those days?

HUGHES: I don't remember them. People didn't use their cars that much. They walked. Young people took buses or walked. They were expected to. They weren't all supposed to have a car. It was unheard of. I never had a car of my own until I . . . later on when I bought my own.

AW: So that the congestion in downtown was the congestion of streetcars and interurbans and trains and not necessarily that many cars?

HUGHES: No. And there was no parking problem because anyone who lived within 10 or 15 blocks of downtown walked.

AW: Or took the streetcar.

HUGHES: Or took the streetcar. And the original . . . the very first streetcars were pulled by mules and horses. And they were painted green and called June bugs. And later they were painted yellow and orange for safety's sake, because they could be seen better.

In the wintertime, they rolled all night long to keep the tracks clean so that they could travel on them with the snow. It kept the snow off of them.

AW: Now, you living right by the tracks, did that keep you awake? Or did you get used to it?

HUGHES: Oh, no. It's just like traffic now. You got used to it. They did a lot of rattling and banging. Everybody had porch swings in those days. Swings were quite the thing. We had a hammock and a rope swing for the kids and a glider swing in the back yard. Then we had a porch swing suspended from the ceiling on the front porch. And the woman next door, one day when I was sitting there with her, kept waving at people that passed on the streetcar and always at least half the people would wave back. And I said, "My, you know an awful lot of people!"

She said, "I don't know 'em but if you wave at people, they'll always wave back." So that was a form of amusement I guess, too.

AW: Did the . . .

HUGHES: The railroads, you could go anywhere in the United States on a train leaving Terre Haute ('course you might have to transfer change trains) because this was really a big railroad center. It was pleasant, and it was fun to go by train, and you could -- unlike the planes -- you could see the scenery. And an awful lot of people my age and probably a little younger really miss the trains, and they feel it's too bad the young people now don't have the experience of riding them. The super trains went, like, out to California. There are still a few out of Chicago. They have the scenic domes where you can look out, and they had marvelous service. They used to have

HUGHES: delicious food on the trains. It was expensive for that day. Probably cost \$1.50 for dinner.

AW: (laughs)

HUGHES: And it was unlike the planes. I don't know. You visited with people. You were on them a little longer. It was pleasant.

AW: Let's go back to downtown for a minute. There's been a red light district that's been greatly discussed. Was a nice young thing like you familiar with the red light district at all?

HUGHES: Well, Terre Haute is hard to understand for some people, but it's a happy town. When you think about it, evidently it's always been an open-minded town. Everybody knew about the red light district. They accepted it as a necessity. And a lot of the people who knew about it in those days still feel we'd be better off with a red light district than having prostitutes in the motels and on CB and other things. Because those girls were under the city Board of Health, and they had to go for examinations once a week and, hopefully, it kept down venereal disease.

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1-SIDE 2

AW: Did you ever go down to the red light district just to take, like, a guided tour?

HUGHES: A couple of generations of young people . . . when they were out on dates, one of the exciting things to do was ride up and down the red light district to see the girls in the windows and sitting on the steps and an occasional red light. They weren't supposed to have red lights, but they did. And, of course, you always centered on Madam Brown's, because that was a very fancy place. It was known all over the country, and we all knew it. My mother was very mid-Victorian. But she talked about the red light district, and it seemed to be an accepted fact that you'd have a red light district. Just like you had saloons. And there were a lot of those all over, too. But it was supervised by the police.

HUGHES: It certainly had its faults. It certainly wasn't pure as the driven snow, but it was supervised prostitution, and we've always had prostitution and evidently always will have.

AW: Did prostitution flourish and saloons flourish partly because of Prohibition?

HUGHES: No. They were in existence long before Prohibition. They started during the Civil War.

AW: Here?

HUGHES: I presume so. Of course, this was a river town. It was a pioneer river town and river towns have always been known as pretty lively towns. And the coal miners worked hard and played hard. And they played hard in the saloons and evidently in the houses of prostitution.

AW: Well then, how did Prohibition affect the saloons and prostitution?

HUGHES: It didn't affect 'em at all. They just bootlegged liquor and went right on. And the only thing that finally closed them was during World War II in 1942 when they were going to bring defense plants in here and they had a Navy program at ISU and, I think, a program to train flyers here - a very small program. The government stepped in. Vern McMillan was mayor then and [the government] said, "You have to close down, or we won't bring those things in here, not with a thriving red light district." And they closed down then and, as such, never opened again. There were a few houses off and on. There was one house up until 1972, but not down there. And then Redevelopment came in and that really wiped the rest of it out.

AW: In the early . . . in the '60s and the '70s?

HUGHES: Yes. The beginning of the '70s, I think.

AW: Was there a lot of . . . during Prohibition was there a lot of bootlegging?

HUGHES: Oh, yes. There was a gang here, and they had a big "still" that they got in trouble about. And my crowd had an awful lot of fun during Prohibition. Also, it was a dancing time. We had a lot of dance halls here. We had the Trianon where they brought

HUGHES: in name bands. Jan Garber, Ben Bernie, and Ted Weems and Jimmie and Tommy Dorsey -- all the big name jazz bands came in here out at the Trianon. And during Prohibition the boy would take a bottle along and you'd slip out and have a quick drink. But there also was Ray Park down at . . . I can't think where it was . . . Riley; and Elm Grove up north at North Terre Haute, Winter Garden, Summer Garden, and Tokyo.

AW: These were all dance halls?

HUGHES: They were all dance halls. Then in Prohibition they had the Rex Club and the Rose Room which were . . . you took your own bottle or, I suppose, if you knew the man, you could get a drink there. And they had orchestras in those places. The other places sometimes had special attractions. One of them had "Big Ione." She was a big fat black woman who played the piano -- honkytonk piano -- and sang dirty songs. Another one had a gal by the name of Nina that was an attraction. I never quite knew what Nina did, but I had a pretty good idea. And you usually went in the back door of these places.

There was another place down in Davis Gardens where we used to go on Sunday afternoon -- a half dozen couples and play poker and drink home brew all afternoon. That's just what young people did then.

AW: So, Prohibition did not cut down on your drinking?

HUGHES: Well, I doubt very much if we would have been drinking that much had it not been for Prohibition. It made it more exciting. There was always a chance you might get raided, too. 'Course, if your name got in the paper (laughs), you were in big trouble with the family.

There was another place called the Log Cabin. Then the Rod and Gun Club was in existence at that time. The really high class places to go were the Spring Brook Rod and Gun Club and Marie Gregory's U.S. 41 South and Davis Avenue which was later called The Apple Club. The Rod and Gun Club still is a great place to go. And The Apple Club only closed a few years ago.

There also was a place called the Cracker Box. And some others but I'd rather not name names.

AW: With all this bootlegging going on, do you think there was any gangster types in town?

HUGHES: There certainly was. They had a still up north, and there were some gangster slayings here. One at 5th and Walnut, I believe, was a local gangster slaying. And it was always said that Capone and some of the other big Chicago gangsters hid out here. I heard that disputed recently -- that it was not Chicago gangsters /but rather/ it was St. Louis gangsters who hid out here, but at any rate

But Terre Haute has been an exciting town. It's been a fun-loving town, and they had a great time. Maybe it was illegal, but everybody was doing it. Prohibition was a big mistake in the first place.

AW: Even the high society people?

HUGHES: Oh, yes. And at the Country Club, they took their bottle. And the place to go, too, in Terre Haute for young people was the Flashlight /southwest corner of 25th and Poplar Streets/. It was a place where you could get sandwiches and soft drinks, and you took your own bottle in and spiked your drink. They served marvelous sandwiches. It was run by Mr. and Mrs. Meirowitz. And that was in existence a long while here, and it was a favorite place to go on dates.

AW: During World War I and the boys went off to war, can you explain what the attitude was at that time? You said they burned German books, but . . .

HUGHES: Well, everything was anti-German and really the German-born people in Terre Haute -- and there were many of them -- had a bad time then, because there was a great deal of ill feeling about it. And, of course, I was only 11 years old. I remember while I was in school, they emphasized that you should do charity work. We would go to the Social Settlement and entertain poor young girls there. I remember two of us bringing two little girls home and giving them a bath and washing their hair and buying them all new outfits. And then during World War I we were encouraged to go down and work at the Red Cross. So we would go down on Saturday morning and roll bandages. And when you're 11 years old and you do that, you feel like you're very, very useful. I

HUGHES: don't know how useful we were, but I remember the Blue Devils, who were flyers -- and flyers were really glamorous then in 1917 -- came in here on a war bond drive. They were French, and I was so excited, because I thought I could speak French to them, and it was a disaster. They laughed at me and hurt my feelings, but (laughs) I tried. And then I do remember the Armistice.

I bit my nails when I was a child, and somebody told mother that if she would have me have a manicure that I would take pride in them and quit biting them. So I had been to the beauty shop to have my manicure, and I came down in the street and everybody was just going crazy!

AW: Which street was that?

HUGHES: On Wabash Avenue. This was over Valentine's drug store which was right where Spectator Court runs into Wabash, and I came down from the second floor from the beauty shop and everybody was just going crazy, and I was frightened. Well, they were crazy (laughs). They were probably all drinking and hugging each other and blowing horns and everything. And that's really about all I remember. My cousin was married during the war and had a military wedding with crossed swords and all, which was very much the "thing" then if you were married during the war.

AW: Let's go to when you graduated from King Classical, you were 18 years old. What kind of choices did you have about your future?

HUGHES: I hadn't thought much about my future. I was only 17, I think. But I thought I wanted to be a secretary, and I took shorthand and typing all summer. I'm afraid I didn't concentrate on it very well (laughs), because I didn't learn much. Then I was offered a job on The Spectator. So I went to work there the day after Labor Day of 1924 right after I graduated from high school in June, and I was there nine months. I started in at \$10 a week, and if they kept me, I was to get a \$2 raise. Well, they kept me, so I got the \$2 raise. At the end of nine months the Star offered me a job as assistant to the women's page and society editor.

AW: What did you do exactly at the Spectator?

HUGHES: Everything. I collected bills. I broke the adding machine the first day, 'cause I was too proud to ask anybody how to operate it. And I collected bills. I kept what they called the "daybook" of bookkeeping. And I wrote "Chat" which was one of their columns and "Bill Smith [Says]"

AW: What was "Chat"?

HUGHES: It was a little gossip thing. I wrote some of that. Oh, somebody had a new boy friend . . . it was just trivia. And then I went over to the Star for \$15 a week.

AW: Who did you work for at The Spectator?

HUGHES: I worked for Nora Clair Williams, who was then the editor. She was the manager. Jerry Burton was the editor. And Don Nixon had been the owner and manager until a year or two before. And then when I went over to the Star, George Padgett was the . . . was the managing editor.

AW: At the Star?

HUGHES: At the Star.

AW: Who was the woman you worked for?

HUGHES: Nora Ball Ragsdale. And I got . . . finally worked up to \$22 a week bit by bit and then in 1929 the Star bought the Post, which was a Scripps-Howard paper, and they moved the staff over there. They kept everybody on the editorial staff as I remember. And they moved the staff over to the Star Building on the southeast corner of 6th and Ohio Street. And we went along that way for two years. During that time, for about six months I was transferred to the Post and worked with Mabel McKee on the women's page there. And then the Schafer interests, who had bought the Post, sold the whole thing to the Tribune Publishing Company. The Schafer interests had had the Indianapolis Star, the Muncie Star, the Chicago Post, I believe, and an Evansville paper. And they started selling them off. Now, whether the Depression was hitting them or what, I don't know -- whether they just wanted to get out -- but finally then, they sold

HUGHES: all but the Muncie and Indianapolis Stars. Eventually those went, too. But they sold the whole thing here in 1931, and the Tribune discontinued the Post. They bought it to discontinue the Post because this was their competition. The Star wasn't. And the Post used to be an exciting paper in that it really, really took a stand on things and was an investigative paper, and it was a sort of sensational paper. It would get out extras all the time. They all got out extras, but the Post did it more. Actually what they did, they took . . . they had three editions in those days. The first edition was just a makeover of the front page from the day before . . . and this went out in the mail. The second edition was the noon edition which went out on the street. And then the last edition which came out about 1:30. And it was the noon edition usually that was made into an extra to sell more papers on the street. So the least little thing they could pick up to make an extra out of, they did.

AW: Was the news . . . was there more local news then? In the paper?

HUGHES: Seems to me, they had a bigger staff than they have now. And it was great fun when I went to work there. They were all a little older than I, but still young people and crazy as they could be. But they got out a good paper.

AW: The Star.

HUGHES: The Star. Well, the Tribune did, too!

So, then they kept denying rumors that it was gonna be sold, and they finally came in one day and said the paper was sold this morning. And, "You're all to come back at 8 o'clock tonight to see if you have a job."

AW: What year was this?

HUGHES: This was 1931. And by then my family had lost everything Luncheonette at 127 South 7th Street they had in the Depression, and I had to have a job. And I got . . . we had to walk up three flights of steps because the elevator wasn't running, and I almost couldn't make it, I was so upset. But I got to keep

HUGHES: my job. But I was only to keep it for the summer, and then they would let me know. So all summer I kept stewing about it. Finally they let Mrs. Ragsdale go, and they let the woman on the Post go, and I was kept. But, the other woman [Mrs. Ragsdale] was making \$33 a week, and I was making \$22; so I took over the whole responsibility of this thing for the \$22.

AW: Did they give you the title of women's editor?

HUGHES: Yes. Well, they called it society editor in those days. But those who were let out . . . a lot were let out, and those who were kept had their salaries cut 25%. They had their vacations cut from two weeks to one week. The Tribune staff, when we went over there to that building then, kept all those benefits, but we didn't. Ours were all cut.

AW: Did they give you any reason why?

HUGHES: Well, we were step-children. They didn't really want us in the first place. They just wanted to get rid of the Post, which wasn't (laughs) our fault. But it went along that way for a long while. And this was in the middle of the Depression when you couldn't get a job. And in those days, there weren't too many things a woman could do. She could be a secretary, a clerk, a typist; she could work in a factory; but there weren't a lot of newspaper women. There were no . . . well, I don't believe there were any radio stations then. At least there weren't many openings for a journalist on them. But I got to stay.

AW: How many women were working at the paper then?

HUGHES: After that happened? Well, on the Tribune there was Anna Bowles Wiley and Mary Grimes. Anna Bowles was a "sob sister" and did general reporting and weepy stories, like interviewing a poor man down in jail for beating his wife because his wife was so mean. He would tell why and so on.

And then Mabel McKee on the Star was the same kind of newspaper woman -- what we called "sob sisters." And I handled all the women's page news from then on.

AW: How many . . . was it just one page or was it more than one page?

HUGHES: Well, it was usually one page. Later on though, you had to get pictures (they didn't use many pictures then), and you had to write your own heads. So you were . . . not like a reporter, you were completely responsible for getting out a page every day.

AW: How did you get the information?

HUGHES: Mostly . . . well, by telephone. They wouldn't let you out of the office. I was the only one in the office in the mornings anyhow, because the staff didn't come in 'til afternoon. But I had to get the woman's page news then.

AW: So you had certain people you called and . . .

HUGHES: Well, you had clubs and you had . . . in those days the Country Club had a party every Saturday night. And, of course, I didn't work on the Sunday paper. The Star staff never could contribute to the Sunday paper. They do now, but they couldn't as long as I was there. And you would call the . . . get the list of hostesses at the Country Club and then call and get their full guest list for every party.

And then when the Depression came along, they didn't want people to know . . . people with money didn't want people who didn't have any money to know that they could afford to entertain like this. So they quit letting you do that.

And then we used personals, and we used births on the woman's page. And then with . . . in recent years with so many robberies and all, you couldn't use personals. People didn't dare put it in the paper they were going to be out of town. So that stopped, that phase of doing social news. In the beginning, too, there used to be tea dances and very formal high teas that women had. And the high tea . . . they usually had some sort of a program, either music or a reader or something. Then they served not only, maybe, dainty sandwiches and cookies and tea like they . . . maybe salted nuts like they do now, but they had a salad and extra things like that. Really /they/ had quite a bit of food at a high tea, and it was very, very formal. Frequently,

HUGHES: the hostesses wore formal gowns, long gowns.

AW: Because you were the women's editor, did you get invited to things?

HUGHES: Yes, I covered the opening [of] the Terre . . . the new building the Terre Haute House. And oh, I was . . . I covered the charity balls, and at the charity balls Kenny Martin would go with me, and we would take pictures of the girls in their ball gowns. Half a dozen pictures. And I had to describe the dresses of most of the people there and be back in the office and have that turned in by midnight.

And I . . . some of the boys would frequently take me home, or if I took a cab (and it was a quarter in those days), I always had to argue about getting my cab fare home. "Why didn't you walk home?" Well, who's going to walk home in a formal gown at midnight?

AW: You thought that the paper should pay for that?

HUGHES: Of course, I did.

AW: Let's go back for a minute to the Depression and . . . When did the Depression start in Terre Haute?

HUGHES: It really started about 1928 when the coal mines started closing. I think they were closing because of . . . well, I don't really know. Something about the railroads, I think. Maybe the railroads were not carrying as much freight and that hurt the economy and then by the crash, why, they really . . . it had really hit Terre Haute. In some ways it seems to me Terre Haute wasn't hit as badly as a lot of other places in the country. I suppose cities were hit where . . . The hospital always fed people. And you had people (some of them had been very wealthy people) come to your door asking for food. And usually we didn't invite them in. They'd sit on the back step. And you usually anticipated that somebody might come, and you kept leftover food from a meal, if you had any leftover food. Because we ate on \$5 a week during the Depression.

And if you provided good food for them, they might put a chalk mark on your front walk so that

HUGHES: the next one who came along would know that he might get fed there and have good food.

AW: Now you said that your family lost everything, but yet you could still feed people?

HUGHES: You . . . you did, you just did. You gave them something. Maybe just a sandwich or maybe a piece of bread and butter and a glass of milk, but you gave them something. You just couldn't turn people away. And you didn't have the fear of going to a door if a man looked shabby then because everybody looked shabby. And the one thing the Depression did, it brought people closer together. You and your friends were all going through the same thing and you shared with each other and you learned to enjoy simple pleasures. You played a lot of cards. And you were able during the . . . the Depression was during Prohibition too. You were able to buy a bottle now and then or My dad made beer and, of course, beer would blow up in the basement once in a while. You might have company, and it'd go pop, pop, pop. Almost everybody made home brew. It was cheaper. And anyhow you couldn't get I think 3% alcohol beer was legal. And some people bought that and then put alcohol in it or did something to it to make it stronger. You made "bathtub gin" with a little juniper and alcohol.

AW: What kind of business was your family in?

HUGHES: They had a candy store and a luncheonette at 127 South 7th Street. So that, you see, was very close to where we lived, so they walked there, too.

AW: And . . . when did that go out of business?

HUGHES: That went out of business in 1928. The very beginning of the Depression.

AW: Why was that?

HUGHES: Well, people could do without candy and they could do without eating out. There were about 20 candy shops and luncheonettes -- eating places downtown -- and only about three or four survived the Depression.

AW: Was there hope that it was going to be over soon? Was everyone surprised it lasted so long?

HUGHES: Oh, yes, because it was . . . and it kept getting worse, of course. Now, I don't remember breadlines in Terre Haute, but I do know that Jerry's Bakery gave away bread, and I know that the hospital fed people. And I know that A. O. Gillis gave away . . . did a lot of charity work during that time -- food and coal and things. And Eddie Gosnell, who had the Rod and Gun Club, had carloads of coal brought up to a siding in the north end of town and gave it away. You could come and get all the coal you could haul away. And many people helped. People . . . that was it -- it brought people closer together. People -- all types of people -- closer together. In the red light district the fee went from \$2 sometimes down to a quarter.

AW: Doing their bit.

HUGHES: Doing their bit. And at one time I understand it was around \$5 which, now, is still low, I guess.

AW: When was Terre Haute called the "Crossroads of the World"?

HUGHES: I always remember it being called that, and it was, as I understand it, because the two main roads intersected, I think, then at 7th and Main. I think U.S. 41 used to go through 7th Street, and then the National Road, or U.S. 40, crossed there.

The bend in 40 where it bends around 9th Street -- Chauncey Rose was instrumental in getting the National Road built, and he had it bend there so it would come by the Terre Haute House, which he owned. It was then the Prairie House.

AW: I see. So it as far as you know was always called "Crossroads of the World"?

HUGHES: I don't remember it ever being called anything else.

On the newspapers, the general strike in Terre Haute was in 1935. And this mob -- I don't know whether they were local union people or they were "goons" from up out of town -- but they came down in front of the Tribune building, and I stood up at the second floor window and looked out at this mob armed with bats. And they said they the newspaper management

HUGHES: would either discontinue the paper that day or they would come in, break up all the machinery. So, they didn't publish that afternoon or the next morning. And by morning -- the next morning -- the National Guard was in. And they patrolled that street, one truck going each way and crossing in the middle, turning at the corner and coming back with machine guns trained out of it . . . for at least a week. And all the unions quit operating during the general strike.

The first day or two there were no bread or milk deliveries. Then they released those people, because there had to be bread and milk for babies. And I suppose the independent groceries were open. Of course, there weren't big markets at that time anyhow.

AW: Do you know why these people came in and had a general strike in Terre Haute?

HUGHES: Yes, but that is a long story that I think is covered elsewhere. It was the Columbian Enameling & Stamping Company labor dispute, and they brought in outsiders [scabs]. Now, whether that caused the trouble or not it's always been debatable, and I don't personally really know. But it was a rather . . . it was a terrifying time. But it was an exciting time for me, because newspaper men came in here from all over this part of the country. And it was great fun 'cause they were very bright men -- interesting men -- and they made our office, of course, their headquarters. And it was interesting to us to see how big time newspaper men operated.

AW: And how did they operate? Any different . . .

HUGHES: Well, maybe it just seemed different. It was just nice to have some outside intellect in there and stimulating to have them around. It was one of the times that newspaper writing was exciting.

AW: When something terrible has (laughs) happened.

HUGHES: Yes, that's right.

AW: How many days did the strike last?

HUGHES: I don't remember that. I think a couple weeks. Gradually people went back to work, but not at the

HUGHES: plant. The plant thing . . . they had all kinds of trouble up there, but generally the other laboring people went back to work, finally. I believe they might have gone back . . . I don't remember now. I believe they might have gone back when the National Guard came in.

AW: Were you frightened to go home? With that big crowd out there?

HUGHES: No, I was frightened when the mob was out there. But they did disperse the mob and . . . no, I wasn't particularly frightened. I was young. I guess I didn't have sense enough to be.

The Star editorial department never did, for years, get back their benefits, and they tried by reasonable means. And finally they sent a committee down to the publisher, Andrew Keifer to try to get some inequities straightened out and were ignored.

AW: When was this?

HUGHES: This was in . . . 1934. And so they . . . two of the reporters went down to a beer place near the office and were having a glass of beer and were talking about it and how unhappy they were. And there was a miner sittin' . . . by the name of Charles Galloway sitting next to them. So he asked them all about it, and he told them to bring him the names of all the editorial personnel in both departments, and he sent them to the Indianapolis Star. And the Indianapolis Star guild came over and with the aid of the printers organized the two departments under the American Newspaper Guild.

AW: In 1934?

HUGHES: In 1934.

AW: Were women members of the Guild?

HUGHES: Well, now . . . I'm wrong about that. I'm sorry. The local was chartered in 1934; that's when we were unhappy. And we did get a charter, but we never did get it organized because the Tribune had nothing to beef about like we the Star staff did. So it was not until 1943 that it really got off the ground and that this occasion happened -- when Indianapolis came

HUGHES: in and organized it. Mr. Galloway was the state officer of the C.I.O. and a member of the miner's union. At that time . . . on the first contract reporters got \$46 and, as society editor, being a woman, [I] got \$36.

AW: In 1943?

HUGHES: Yes. I had all the responsibilities both in the office, in my job -- more really than straight reporter -- and responsibility at home equal to any man there. The society editor stayed on a 6-day week; the others got a 5-day week. And, of course, it was 40 hours; it had to be. Then the War Labor Board would only approve dollar raises each week for each person in 1944 and '45. In '45 and '46 they would only allow \$2 raises. And I became president of the local in 1948. And I had been pressing the men to try to get equal pay and equal hours for me (or equal days), and they said it couldn't be done. So I got to be president, and I did it.

AW: Did they elect you president?

HUGHES: Yes. I had been vice president and then moved up to president. It was just like most organizations. Nobody wanted it anyhow.

AW: (laughs)

HUGHES: So it was not until the 1949-50 contract that the society editor classification got a 5-day week and the same salary as the men.

In 1960 a pension plan was put in. Then on October 22, 1964, the typographical union and the mailers struck the paper. We didn't have a contract either, so all we could do was strike too. You would not get your union benefits if you didn't. Anyhow we didn't have a contract either. That strike lasted 7-1/2 months.

AW: No newspapers in Terre Haute?

HUGHES: No newspapers in Terre Haute all that time. The Indianapolis papers moved in right now. You got \$25 a week from the union and \$10 extra for each dependent. My father had died in the meantime, so I got \$35 a week. I didn't have to go into my savings,

HUGHES: because I managed to write social news for the Indianapolis News, which was distributing all over Terre Haute. And I got \$100 a month out of it. So I was able to get along. I didn't buy anything in that 7-1/2 months. We had to walk a picket line for two hours at a time no matter what the weather for that . . . well not quite 7-1/2 months because we settled before they [the craft unions] did. But I walked [in] 2 below zero and in the hottest days, in the rain. And if you walked in back of the building in the rain, smart alects would drive through there and splash you. And we had set up headquarters in the Odd Fellows Building. That was something we believed in.

AW: Were there negotiations during that 7 months?
All the time?

HUGHES: Constantly.

AW: Who was the paper owner at that time?

HUGHES: Well, Tony Hulman was the main stockholder, I think. Mr. [Louis] Kiefer, some of the Fairbanks' estate. And the Guild accepted the offer on March 29, 1965, and we quit picketing then. But the printers and mailers didn't sign until June 9; so we were still on strike, but we didn't have to picket any more.

AW: What happened to the news during that time?
I know the Indianapolis papers came in but . . .

HUGHES: Well, we didn't have TV then . . . did we? I guess I didn't have a TV then. (laughs)

AW: In 1964, yes.

HUGHES: But the . . .

AW: Did the radio pick up . . .

HUGHES: Radio picked up a lot of news and the out-of-town papers came in. And it was a long while before they got back that circulation.

When we first moved over to the Tribune building in 1931, from then on you were around 7th and Wabash, and you got to know everybody who worked around

HUGHES: 7th and Wabash. There were some particular characters that you never forget. One was Henry Rickelman, a real tall cop, and that was his beat. And he was a . . . everybody liked him. And I think he did a pretty good job -- at least I thought he did.

There was Earl Wetzel, who was a newspaper salesman on the corner. Always carried this huge stack of papers under his arm. Tall, lanky man . . . and besides being all up and down Wabash Avenue in all the stores and everyplace, he made all the trains. He'd walk up to the railroad station Union depot making all the trains selling papers.

Then there was Ed Taylor, who didn't have any arms. And he had a sack of papers hung around his neck, and he would use those stumps to pull papers out of there and hand them to his customers. Then he had a big purse hung on his belt that they dropped the money in. He was around there for years. Everybody knew Earl Wetzel and Ed Taylor and Rickelman.

AW: Interesting characters.

HUGHES: You got to know lawyers around there and people who worked in the different offices.

AW: Now, let's go back to the Depression and the end of the Depression. Do you know when the Depression started ending in Terre Haute? Was it when World War II started?

HUGHES: No, it wasn't that late. It was pretty well ended by then. I think it started to end about 1935. It was hard to go through it, but people were beginning to revive, and there were more jobs and things were opening up.

AW: Were there WPA Works Progress (later, Work Projects) Administration jobs and those type of things?

HUGHES: Oh, yes. A lot of it was in paving sidewalks and, I believe, streets. There were all kinds of programs. I believe there was a CCC Civilian Conservation Corps thing that was for young people put in camps. I don't know what they did, I'd forgotten about that. (laughs)

HUGHES: And, of course, the banks got back in more stable condition which was a help, after Roosevelt declared the moratorium. It stopped the runs on the banks and then you were a little more secure, although it was still just the beginning of the Depression almost, but you didn't feel that what little money you had might slip away from you. I had just a few hundred dollars in the Citizens Bank [19 South 6th Street], and a week before the bank closed, I went in there and asked if I could draw my money out. Actually, I only wanted . . . I had a premonition of some kind, but also I wanted to get it down closer to the Tribune building 'cause we'd moved over to the Tribune building. And they wanted to know why I wanted to draw it out. And I said, "Well, I just wanted to put it down closer to the Tribune building," so they let me have it. But if I'd waited one more week, I would have lost it, and it was all I had. 'Cause that bank paid very little on what was in there. And finally closed completely.

AW: So, coming up to the war, what was downtown Terre Haute like? You said at one point that the streetcars went out of business in 1939?

HUGHES: I believe that's when it was. But things had revived by World War II. And then, of course, we got these defense plants in here. We got a south plant and a north plant. The north plant was duPont -- or it was built by duPont. Then things started really picking up, because there were a lot of people here. You couldn't rent a house for anything, and everything was thriving during those war years.

AW: The downtown stores?

HUGHES: Yes. And continued to thrive until the shopping centers started coming in, and then that kept drawing away from downtown. And I-70 was built, and that brought the people . . . instead of coming in on 40 into downtown, [it] brought them around town, and they didn't shop in the downtown area any more. But at one time, there were many [stores] besides these four department stores I mentioned. They were specialty shops. There were beautiful shops for women. The May sisters, the LaSalle Shop, Petersdorf's, Phil Silver's, Fred Snapp's. There were good shoe stores -- the Walkover and Hornung & Hahn. Another

HUGHES: place that was always well known downtown was Chili Chambers' -- Chili Bill's. And they had marvelous chili there. And the Toasty Shop was a place where . . . up until maybe 15 years ago -- where many business men and women ate lunch. Marvelous sandwiches in there and it was open, I believe, all night.

AW: When did they start paving over the tracks? Do you know that? The interurbans went out in 1939 . . .

HUGHES: I suppose . . .

AW: . . . and somehow or other they paved over the tracks.

HUGHES: I suppose soon after they discontinued the lines, because they were dangerous, you know. You could get your car tire caught in those tracks. Although none of them were built above the streets, they were recessed. Even so, it could sway you when you got a car caught in there. I don't remember that, because I had moved away from 521 South 7th. I moved away from there in 1928, and so I didn't pay too much attention to streetcar tracks (laughs) after that.

AW: Thank you, Frances, for participating in the Vigo County Oral History Project. This interview was taped Saturday, November 1, 1980, from 2 o'clock until almost 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

END OF TAPE

FRANCES E. HUGHES

Tape 2

November 2, 1980

Frances Hughes' apartment -- 400 S. 29th St., Terre Haute, IN

AW: When we completed the interview on Saturday, Frances decided she had some things she wanted to say in defense of Terre Haute, so this is Sunday afternoon, November 2, at Frances Hughes' apartment on South 29th Street.

Frances, what are some of the things you wanted to say in defense of the city?

HUGHES: Well, I have no apologies to make for Terre Haute. As a third generation native and retired newspaper person who felt the heartbeat of the city in the editorial rooms for 47 years I feel I should understand the city. Its natives are, by and large, liberal in their views. They have a "live and let live" attitude. My generation has lived through a wonderful period in history. We've gone through . . . in transportation, from the horse and buggy days to the man on the moon. We've lived through two world wars, the Korean conflict, Vietnam, the Depression and Prohibition. I don't know which was the worst.

We've seen progress in many fields in spite of all these things. Through all of this, we've suffered hardships, happiness, and we've had a lot of fun. Terre Haute's been exciting, not dull, and it's still a good place to rear children. When outsiders call this "Sin City," "City of No Growth," "Nowhere U.S.A.," we're mostly amused. We know what we are, but they don't. It offends me when a comparative newcomer says of Terre Haute that "the problems of urbanization occurred in a community unusually poor in human, political and financial resources." Most native Terre Hauteans are angry over this. If Terre Haute had any outstanding fault, I would say it is snobbery.

Although it is easier than it was, it is still hard for newcomers to make friends here unless they already have a contact. I've had women say to me, "How long do you have to live in Terre Haute before you're accepted?"

AW: How long do you have to live in Terre Haute before you're accepted?

HUGHES: I think that sort of depends on you and circumstances. If you have come in with a plant and the plant sees that you meet people, or if you join a church, or you join the Newcomer's Club or the Country Club, then you start to make friends. But if you're too progressive in your attitude toward making friends, Terre Hauteans have a way of pushing you back.

Terre Haute's always had class. It's always had an active social life, and Terre Hauteans like to have fun. When Terre Haute was still a baby, churches started here. Now, we have many churches of all denominations.

When it is said that it is poor in human resources, I don't know exactly what that means. If it means compassion, Chauncey Rose, who was one of our first millionaires, donated the Rose Dispensary which dispensed free medicine to the poor. He had the Rose Ladies' Aid Society where he set up a huge fund that was used for the distress of the poor. He gave the Rose Home for the aged, and he, of course, started Rose Poly.

Crawford Fairbanks, another early millionaire, gave the Clara Fairbanks Home for aged women and the Emeline Fairbanks Library, both of which are still in existence.

Our high schools have always been integrated. And during slave days blacks and whites here were part of the underground railroad. There are still some houses around Terre Haute that have hiding places for slaves who were going through here to freedom.

AW: Do you know where any of those houses are?

HUGHES: I went in one once which has since burned down. It was in the southwest part of the city. There is another house down in there that has a runway from the basement to a pond there which either was used as a protection against the Indians or as a hiding place for runaway slaves. And the original church -- the black church on South 3rd Street Allen Chapel A.M.E. protected slaves who came through here. I can't remember the name of that church.

HUGHES: Early on, we had the Social Settlement, the poor farm, the Friendly Inn, the Girls' Club, and the Boys' Club and the Goodwill Industry to help the poor. Even the red light district helped the poor. Those women down there donated. They donated to the Boys' Club, and they donated to other charity events.

AW: And the Terre Haute residents accepted that?

HUGHES: They welcomed it. Those people weren't all bad. And not only that, but when the red light district closed, this had a big effect on the economy of downtown Terre Haute. Because the most expensive clothes -- of lingerie and jewelry -- in the downtown stores were bought by madams and prostitutes or by men who bought them for them. And they welcomed that business! It hurt Terre Haute when that business fell off.

Also, when we're talking about human resources -- as I say, I don't understand what it means -- we've had many famous people in the arts, science, education, theatre, authors, composers, journalists, musicians from Terre Haute. I guess that's part of the human resources.

We've had three fine colleges started early in Terre Haute. We had private schools early. Our public schools have always had a high rating. We have Swope Gallery, the Historical Society to preserve our heritage.

On political resources we've had scandals, but what city hasn't? What government hasn't? But we've had independent thinking voters. We produced a Secretary of the Navy and several ambassadors. We've had outstanding senators and congressmen.

One of our greatest humanitarians -- although there are many who may not agree -- was Eugene V. Debs. He ran for president five times on the Socialist ticket and formed some of the very early unions.

When we get into finances, we had in 1902 in the New York Almanac seven Terre Haute millionaires that were listed. They were George W. Bement, Andrew J. Crawford, Demas Deming, Jr., Crawford Fairbanks, Herman Hulman, W. R. McKeen, and Mrs. Sophie Wheeler. Now, we have between 75 and 100.

HUGHES: Most of those people made their money here, and a lot of it's been kept here.

AW: Now, of these original eight millionaires is their money still here? Are their descendants still here?

HUGHES: A lot of them are still here. The Crawfords, the Hulmans, the McKeens -- I guess that's all. Most of the others either didn't leave heirs or are no longer in Terre Haute.

Only two of our banks failed during the Depression, and we had quite a few banks at that time. Our banks have always been substantial. Every bank suffered during that time.

When John Lamb was interviewed for this oral history project, he said, "I'll never deal Terre Haute a dirty hand, because I loved the town."

Shubert Sebree on his interview said, "I consider Terre Haute a good city with fine schools, colleges, and cultural centers." He said he didn't know where one would find a better community in which to live.

Recently, I asked Lenhardt Bauer how he felt about Terre Haute. He was the son of an immigrant farmer from Germany and feels that Terre Haute has been very good to him. He said that Terre Haute's a red-blooded town that represents the best of American tradition, individual freedom, bold expression, and action frosted over by a tinge of hypocrisy on the part of those who like to think of themselves as the select few and really aren't. In the end, the majority shines through. He also said, "I particularly resent any Johnny-come-lately who would say that Terre Haute failed in qualities of good humane, political, and financial resources. All these qualities are here and are put to good use for the community benefit."

AW: Then John and . . . John Lamb and Lenhardt Bauer both feel there's an element of snobbery there, too, just like you thought?

HUGHES: That's right, and John Lamb was from a very old family and rather wealthy people most of his life. But he still recognized the feeling of snobbery here.

HUGHES: Someone sent me a poem . . . or someone sent me a column written by an Indianapolis newspaperman, John Ackelmire, several years ago. And it was in his column, "Good Evening," in the Indianapolis News that he tried to defend the fact that Indianapolis newspapermen have always ridden Terre Haute about anything that happened here. Gambling, nobody says too much about Las Vegas gambling. They get a big bang out of it. Nobody says anything about the fact that there was a red light district in Fort Wayne, Evansville, Indianapolis and other places in the state, I'm sure. I think maybe one reason notable here is because this is half-way between a village and a city. It has a lot of city values, and it has a lot of small-town values. And it drew people for business and pleasure from all the surrounding areas.

 This newspaperman wrote: "It is hoped that Terre Haute, while making admirable cultural and economic advances, is not losing that splendid insouciance, that lusty scorn of outside opinion, which gave it character and personality in the long ago. Terre Haute did a lot in its time to protect Indiana against a reputation for insufferable holier-than-thou-ness. It didn't have much use for professional reformers, less for stuffed shirts and none at all for sanctimonious hypocrites."

 He stressed that Terre Haute had a wariness of progress, that bigness for the sake of bigness didn't appeal to us; and maybe that's why a lot of people feel we haven't progressed as we should. We've been happy with the way things were. We didn't feel that we had to be a big city. And what's happened to us has happened to many cities. I don't know why people single this one out.

 He said that it did not show a great leap in population, and "It lets pimply pre-sociologists from the universities stew about that."

 In closing, Ackelmire gave a toast to Terre Haute which I think tells as well as any ol' local old-timer could do it what Terre Haute is.

 "Terre Haute . . . good old cornfed,
cosmopolitan, cultured, church-going,
crapshooting, concrete-muscled, urbane

HUGHES: "Terre Haute . . . a whangdoodle of a town with hay in its hair beneath a Cavanagh hat . . . 100-proof sour mash bourbon by volume and 500% American patriot by choice . . . a town with a glow of compassion in its heart and a gleam of deviltry in its eye . . . a flirty Gertie to some, to others a devout lady . . . ever a happy warrior in the battlements above the fabled Wabash against the Squadrons of the Smug, the Platoons of the Prunefaces and the Society for the Prevention of Having Fun."

So, I think we should toast our flirty-gertie and have fun here and not worry about what people think.

AW: What about new people who come in and don't plan on staying and then ten years later you hear them saying, "When I came to Terre Haute, I didn't plan on staying, but I'm here now." Do you hear that a lot?

HUGHES: Yes, you do and that's strange when you consider that they're not particularly welcomed when they come. But once they've been here a while and made friends -- maybe we have a little southern half-hospitality after all -- they seem to stay. Also, many of my friends who moved away from here when they married and all, in their retirement, have come home. This is still their home and roots with native Terre Hauteans, I find, pretty much go very deep.

AW: Terre Haute's been said to be a real retirement center, and there are a lot of elderly here. And not just elderly that came back, but specifically came here to retire. Do you understand that?

HUGHES: Well, I think they came "home," and a lot of them stayed here. I understand . . . the last report I heard it was 8% of the population who were senior citizens in Vigo County, and . . . no, it was 8th in the country -- not 8%, in the percentage of senior citizens -- and that's pretty high on the ladder.

HUGHES: We do a lot for senior citizens here in various federal programs and senior citizens' centers and all, but I feel the merchants don't do enough. They buy for college age, but they don't buy for senior citizens. They must presume we're all poor. And senior citizens probably don't buy as many clothes, because they don't need them. But a lot of them buy better clothes, and they buy, naturally, styles appropriate for them. And the stores here don't seem to feature that.

Many women friends of mine cannot buy shoes in Terre Haute. They merchants don't buy the sizes, they don't buy the styles. They buy the real high heels which senior citizens can't wear.

AW: So, perhaps the merchants haven't caught up with the fact that there's a big senior citizen population here?

HUGHES: I think they haven't. Also, senior citizens who've always lived here would like to shop downtown. It's a chore for many of 'em to go to Honey Creek or if the center is very far away -- the shopping center -- very far away from where they live. They have to take a bus or they have to have someone take them, because many finally get to the place where they can't drive. And 'most all of them could easily go downtown on the bus.

I think when Terre Haute's built up again -- and I think it will be -- they'll find that the business is there.

AW: You were involved with the Senior Citizens' Center for some time. How did it get started?

HUGHES: Ben Blumberg, who was a great philanthropist for Terre Haute -- he did many things that he never let be publicized -- bought the old B'nai Abraham Orthodox Jewish Temple for \$50,000 and set it up for a Senior Citizens' Center. And he subsidized it for two years until it got on its feet. That's been a good thing for Terre Haute.

AW: The Senior Citizen Center -- is it an active social place for senior citizens?

HUGHES: It's an active social place, and they have bus tours, and they have about 2,000 members. Now I believe they have another Senior Citizen Center over at Glenn Center. And there are other programs. There is Foster Grandparent program and . . . well, I really don't know all of them, but these are all federally subsidized. Senior Citizens' Center does get some federal money, but it's a United Way agency.

AW: You said you wanted to make this statement. Now that we've talked a little while longer, is there anything else you want to say in closing?

HUGHES: Oh, I think not, but I think the Chamber of Commerce maybe could do a little more in promoting Terre Haute in the right way. Newspapers could. And I think we should be proud of Terre Haute. I am.

AW: Thank you.

That's Frances Hughes, November 2, 1980, in her home for the Vigo County Oral History project.

END OF TAPE 2

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